

No Standing Ovation for “Three Cheers...”

Dear Sir:

In his March-April 2002 article, “Three Cheers for Attrition Warfare,” LTC Steven Eden reveals some of the basic problems armor leaders face as they develop doctrine for future warfare. I applaud LTC Eden for airing a much-needed contrarian argument to enliven the ongoing debate. Too often, discussions of armor doctrine are simply restatements of the conventional wisdom that maneuver warfare equals good and attrition warfare equals bad. However, his article also shows how discussions of doctrine have become bogged down by this false choice between attrition warfare and maneuver warfare. Those terms have been used to vaguely pigeonhole multiple schools of thought on warfighting and have become so overused, misunderstood, and vague that they are practically useless.

Because of this oversimplification, LTC Eden himself seems to ignore his own description of the tank as a unique combination of mobility and firepower. Armor is defined by its unique ability to both inflict large amounts of destruction AND rapidly maneuver on the ground. Any doctrine for the employment of armor has to recognize this fact and move away from simple characterizations of attrition versus maneuver.

LTC Eden convincingly argues that commanders at a disadvantage far more frequently emphasize maneuver. He also correctly points out that the side with an overwhelming qualitative and quantitative advantage usually achieves victory, frequently making maneuver irrelevant in the final result. He then makes a dangerous jump in logic. He concludes that using U.S. materiel superiority to simply destroy large amounts of enemy personnel and equipment will, and should, inevitably lead to victory.

LTC Eden asks, in essence, “Why bother trying to find ways to win wars faster and more efficiently when we can always grind them to a pulp with superior resources and technology?” To accept this logic is to abandon one’s professional military ethics; leaders at all levels have a responsibility to accomplish the mission while minimizing costs in men and materiel. Further, relying on materiel superiority means that the military leader passes the responsibility for ensuring victory to scientists, industrialists, recruiters, and budget committees.

This approach also underestimates the primacy of the human element in war. High enemy body counts and favorable kill ratios do not necessarily win wars or cause the enemy’s will to collapse. Ask General Westmoreland. Hoping that if you kill enough of the enemy they will eventually give up is not a certain road to victory, because the side that is winning by the numbers may not be winning the war of wills.

In his argument, LTC Eden is not only criticizing maneuver warfare as he understands it. He is also implicitly attacking any approach — like many versions of maneuver theory — that focuses primarily on the psychological, rather than the physical, effects of military force. This is where he goes astray. He is correct that firepower will become more dominant in future warfare, but that does not necessarily mean that materiel factors will become more important than human or organizational ones.

LTC Eden’s example of the Gulf War actually shows the primacy of human and organizational factors. We now can say with a great deal of certainty that Iraqi casualties and physical losses from the air campaign were far lower than we thought at the time. Numerically, the damage was far from decisive, but it caused the collapse of the Iraqi army’s fragile C3 system, morale, and cohesion. These were the centers of gravity that, when attacked, set up such decisive results. Only after this collapse did coalition armored forces move in to inflict the killing blow on a “hapless and ineffectual” enemy.

The article illustrates that there is a lot more to developing a basis for future armor doctrine than choosing attrition or maneuver — one has to choose between a mathematical/materiel and a human/psychological perspective on warfare. The choice should be clear. Victory will go to the army that most efficiently employs its firepower and maneuver against the enemy’s will and ability to fight. Whether or not one actually inflicts the most casualties or destruction in simple physical terms is secondary to defeating the enemy. Since the days of the first tanks, armor’s power to defeat the enemy has been as much rooted in the psychological as the physical. If armor leaders remember that, armor will continue to remain the arm of decision in land warfare.

MARKUS V. GARLAUSKAS

On Attrition Warfare and Dead Cats

Dear Sir:

Ouch! Careful when swinging those dead cats, LTC Eden. You might bruise my delicate egg-shaped head.

I would like to take issue with three of LTC Eden’s points in “Three Cheers for Attrition Warfare.” The first is his using “SAMS graduate” as an epithet, the second his thesis, and the last his poor use of historical examples.

I am disturbed by articles in this magazine by LTC Eden and others denigrating officers who attended the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS). Have they considered the effects of their comments? I don’t want

any sympathy for those of us who have already gone to SAMS. My problem with the comments is the effect that they have on junior majors who are considering attending SAMS. Do you think there are many young armor majors who want to attend SAMS after reading these comments? I have not met one armor officer in the past three years who expressed any interest in SAMS. Many of them cited comments like LTC Eden’s from senior officers.

What are the consequences of armor majors avoiding SAMS? After completing SAMS, officers are primarily assigned to G3 Plans in divisions and corps. SAMS graduates are the people who write the corps and division operations plans that battalions and brigades execute. If no armor officers go to SAMS, then who will be writing those operations plans? What is their branch? Will they have any idea how long an armor brigade takes to move, how much ground it occupies, or how long it takes to refuel? If we do not encourage armor officers to attend SAMS, we are likely to face a future of higher headquarters giving us unexecutable, completely unrealistic operations orders written by someone who has no clue how to conduct armor operations.

While we should be encouraging young armor majors to attend SAMS, it does not mean that we should treat graduates with kid gloves. Mentor them just as you would anybody else. When you catch a SAMS graduate, or any officer, floating in the realms of theory instead of slogging through the synchronization matrix, jerk a knot in their chain and bring them back down to earth. In the past, the SAMS curriculum did tend to focus on the “deep thoughts, transformation of war” stuff. In a unit, deep thoughts and bright ideas are the domain of the commander, not the planners. The planner’s job is to take the commander’s bright ideas and quickly turn them into a well-synchronized plan that can be quickly understood and violently executed by the subordinate units. If your SAMS graduates cannot do that, mentor them and provide feedback to Fort Leavenworth to improve their POI.

I would next like to disagree with his thesis that our future wars are likely to degenerate into battles of attrition rather than campaigns of maneuver. First, maneuver warfare does not depend on technology. In fact, we are far more likely to have it inflicted on us by a technologically and economically inferior foe than we are to wage it against him. Second, while war between evenly matched opponents does often degenerate into attrition warfare, we are very unlikely to meet a peer opponent who can force us into a war of attrition. Last, even if destroying an opponent by attrition is feasible, it is unlikely to be considered acceptable or suitable by the American people.

The last problem with the article is the poor use of historical examples. The author briefly touches on a broad number of historical examples and seeks to impress us with his familiarity with some of the more obscure military leaders. While this name-dropping demonstrates an impressive level of breadth in his historical reading, it does little to bolster his argument and serves to confuse less well-read people. A senior officer who has had LTC Eden's educational opportunities should do a better job of showing younger officers how to construct an argument.

All of the maneuvering "losers" described by LTC Eden kept their forces in the fight far longer than if they had employed other TTPs. They inflicted greater casualties on their enemies and spared the lives of their soldiers. Our enemies are likely to employ the same TTPs on us. Desperate or not, we need to study maneuver to improve our understanding of the art of war. Our soldiers and the American people *do expect us to win with style*, that is, quickly, with as few casualties as possible. Attrition can happen and we must be prepared for it. But it is our duty to avoid the bloodlettings and, instead, maneuver to defeat our enemy quickly and at the lowest cost. It has always been the intent of every commander for whom I have worked, and it will be part of every plan and order that I write. Who will be writing the orders for your higher headquarters, LTC Eden, and do they understand what it takes for an armor unit to maneuver?

ERNEST A. SZABO
LTC, AR
Cdr, 3-362 AR (TS)

Applause for "Three Cheers..."

Dear Sir:

Highest compliments to LTC Steven J. Eden and his article, "Three Cheers for Attrition Warfare," in the March-April issue of *ARMOR*.

The article should be filed away and reprinted every three to five years or as needed whenever a new fad "...that will change the face of land warfare as we know it," comes along.

CHESTER A. KOJRO
LTC, AR, USAR (Ret.)

Maneuver vs. Attrition Warfare It's the Culture

Dear Sir:

Responding to LTC Steve Eden's "Three Cheers for Attrition Warfare," I want to thank *ARMOR* again for publishing material that creates intellectual ferment. What LTC Eden addresses is the doctrinal mindset of our current Army (military), but fails to address the cultural aspect of maneuver vs. attrition warfare. History, combined with the changing

face of war, supports a need for our Army, our military, to adapt maneuver warfare as its cultural mindset. Let's start with history.

In his examples of material over brains, he forgot several successful examples of maneuver warfare that won wars. A list of ten successful practitioners comes to my mind. I am proud to say, despite the establishment's claim that "maneuverists" (I am often called worse names) are all negative when it comes to referencing the use of maneuver warfare by the U.S. Army, that our Army had several commanders who practiced maneuver warfare: George Washington at Trenton and Princeton, Winfield Scott on his drive to Mexico City, and U.S. Grant at Vicksburg (where did Sterling Price come in?) versus lackluster Pemberton (though Grant could not have known of his incompetence at the time after Pemberton performed well in the preceding months).

Grant's 1864 campaign in Virginia operationally was maneuver warfare (which is what maneuver warfare is all about) while Grant fought a war of attrition at the tactical level (he lost a less percentage of his army than Lee); his "fixing" of Lee loosened other forces to conduct campaigns of maneuver (Sherman's 1864 Northern Georgia campaign is a great study in maneuver warfare at the operational level, and attrition at the tactical level). John Shirley Wood's 4th Armor Division in France in 1944 is another successful maneuver warfare unit; and shifting national gears, how about the Israeli army of 1956, 1967, and 1973 (whose practice of maneuver warfare was created to diminish casualties)? Or, I will backtrack, how about one of the most successful armies in history (and it was outnumbered), the Prussian Army of 1866 and 1870 (practiced maneuver warfare at the operational level). With this in mind, what has attrition warfare won for the United States?

And, I don't know how attrition warfare won Vietnam for our nation? The Gulf War, that is a good one, attrition mindset (which is more cultural and doctrinal) gave us a hollow victory. Why; we failed to understand the battle of encirclement and focused inward on graphics due to our culture of overcontrol and a fear of casualties. Yes, by the way, we used airpower the wrong way. Where was the Republican Guard two weeks after the war ended? How about Somalia? Another example of our great soldiers fighting their tails off, but getting no support — enough said. Oh, yes Kosovo, where the air tasking order required a 72-hour reaction time to adjust to Serbian Army changes on the ground, where video conferences were held with commanders twice a day to ensure no errors. How many Serbian vehicles did we really destroy when the truth was known, released by *Newsweek*? But, we have had a great record with attrition warfare.

Attrition warfare is the absence of strategy. We have chosen this course of action because U.S. military history is filled with the conflict of amateurism versus professional-

ism driven by the need to create massed armies overnight as part of our national strategy called mobilization doctrine (termed "The American Way of War"). This, in turn, is caused by the neo-Hamilton fear of a professional officer class and army. In turn, attrition doctrine provides an adequate blueprint to bring citizen soldiers and officers more attuned to being peacetime managers up to speed with some coherence in conducting warfare.

The United States can act this way because it has the most dominant economy in world history. In turn, this economy prospered with its citizens having no fear of constantly rebuilding burnt cities, replanting destroyed crops, and finding homes for refugees. This is because it is protected by the two largest moats in the world — the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; and it is bordered north and south by peaceful neighbors. Thus, with these two themes, we have practiced, with exceptions, attrition or 2d generation warfare throughout our military's history, especially since the Civil War. The question beckons, in the 21st century, with the evolution of 4th generation warfare, will this focus on 2d generation warfare be adequate?

What LTC Eden should address is the cultural mindset of attrition, or 2d generation warfare, with maneuver, or 3d generation warfare. In terms of the controversial form of argument — and one that is more fun — is the one that centers on cultural differences.

Maneuver warfare is directed toward destroying enemy cohesion as opposed to seizing real estate; at taking the enemy force out of play decisively instead of wearing him down through slow attrition; high tempo war; fluid war that has no defined fronts or formations; decentralized armies where troops act on their own with high initiative as opposed to centralized command structures where troops ask permission and wait for orders; war designed to place the enemy in a dilemma, to suck him into traps of his own creation, taking advantage of his stupidities and weaknesses and avoiding his strengths; war where soldiers act on judgment, not on rules; war without rules; war that seeks to penetrate the enemy rather than push opposing lines backwards and forwards; war waged by a cohesive team that is like a family or tribe with a common culture and common outlook; and a willingness to fight close, not just applying firepower from a long standoff, but infiltrating when the opportunity arises, as did 1st Marine Division in Desert Storm.

The current Army culture has developed parallel with evolving and institutionalizing attrition doctrine.

The bottom line is that as long as the leaders of the Army put excuses up front and solve the problem by tinkering with the system, as they did with OPMS XXI, or by using more pay, e-mail to seniors, providing more time off, and consolidating the software

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PERSCOM (Personnel Command) uses to manage records “better,” they will never fix these problems. When senior leaders, and entrenched civilian bureaucrats at PERSCOM, do not study history, psychology, sociology, or anthropology, the Army will continue to descend in an ever-tightening personal death spiral.

I apologize for my counterattack. LTC Eden, you are right; we have to stick to attrition warfare. In April 2001, a report written by a blue ribbon panel on leadership and training, chartered by Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, states that, “Micromanagement has become part of the Army Culture.” Furthermore, the report goes on to state, “Army Culture is out of balance. There is friction between Army beliefs and practices.

Over time, that friction threatens readiness. Training is not done to standard, leader development in operational assignments is limited and does not meet officer expectations, and officers and their families elect to leave the service early.” With this evidence and blunt statement from the Army itself, there is no way we can practice maneuver warfare.

DONALD E. VANDERGRIF
MAJ, Armor
Georgetown University

Right Argument, Wrong Journal

Dear Sir:

Having read LTC Steve Eden’s article, “Three Cheers for Attrition Warfare,” in the

March-April issue, I feel compelled to write in admiration of his pluck. LTC Eden argues persuasively, if bitingly, against over-reliance on our notions of asymmetric maneuver warfare being the wave of the future. For those of us who know him personally, his words carry extra weight because we know that he knows whereof he speaks; he is not only technically and tactically proficient, in the words of OER-speak, but he is also a superb military historian.

I regret to say that I think that there is one major problem with his argument — it is published in the wrong journal. Making this argument in *ARMOR* is akin to preaching to the converted. I enjoy reading affirmation of my own views in our branch journal. However, I have the sneaking suspicion that

many senior leaders, both military and civilian, who need to have their views challenged, don't read *ARMOR*, at least not with the regularity that Neanderthaloid tankers and cavalrymen do.

This seems evident to me in the Department of Defense's recent cancellation of the Crusader program, in favor of redirecting that money, in the words of Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, "to accelerate other Army Transformation technology research programs which promise early returns" (*ArmyLINK News*, May 2002). The Army's news release ends with Secretary Rumsfeld's statement that the Crusader was seven years into development and yet no prototype exists. Meanwhile, Comanche, which has been in development much longer than Crusader, will not achieve initial operational capability until 2006. The Future Combat System, on which so much of the Objective Force depends, is just now entering development with only the vaguest notion of what it will be, yet the Army is making plans that this system will be in the hands of soldiers by the end of this decade.

Many will read into Eden's argument that he is arguing against transformation of the Army. I think not. Eden is challenging the notion that conventional warfare is dead forever or, even if it is not, that there are silver bullets out there just over the technological horizon that will obviate the need for heavy, conventional forces. The point is that we don't know what the future holds, we don't know that technologies will or will not pan out — we don't know what we don't know — and history, contrary to popular opinion, doesn't reliably teach us anything except, perhaps, that we should expect the unexpected.

This article deserves the wider audience of *Army*, and I hope that the staff of *ARMOR* will inquire about a possible reprinting there. I expect that LTC Eden's views will generate quite a response and nothing but good can come from that. The asymmetric/RMA warriors have had the battlefield to themselves long enough — if they are right in the prognostications about the future of war, a healthy and open debate will only strengthen their arguments, not weaken them.

STEVEN C. GRAVLIN
LTC, Armor (Ret.)

Eden Inaccurately Dismisses Maneuver Warfare

Dear Sir:

I would like to discuss several aspects of LTC Eden's article that I disagree with. LTC Eden has a lot of common sense and a good inoculation against RMA political correctness. However, his article is a bit excessive in its treatment of history and its dismissal of maneuver warfare.

The great maneuver commanders he cites were not losers. Their side lost, their strategy failed, or their operations fell short, for reasons mostly beyond their control.

Grant knew the virtue of maneuver warfare, as we all agree. But he abandoned it because: he faced Lee, an enemy commander who was as good at it as he was; he realized his subordinates in the east (Meade and his corps commanders) were not Sherman, Thomas, and Sheridan, and for all their considerable virtues had neither schooling in the method nor a history of offensive success; he had the resources to win through simple numerical attrition; and he appreciated the threat to Washington and to Lincoln's reelection prospects if he ever let Lee's attention wander from the grind toward Richmond.

Napoleon, as any commander, depended on his subordinates for the execution of his operational method. As his best marshals were lost, or dispatched to the Peninsula to be bested by Wellington (another great maneuver commander), and as a consequence of poor strategic decisions, his fortunes waned. His 1814 campaign was indeed brilliant, and he certainly could not have fought half as well or half as long by any other method.

Rommel lost his campaign in North Africa for lack of resources, not because of any flaw in his operational method. Montgomery, like Grant, understood that his advantages were in materiel and manpower and exploited them intelligently. Does anyone believe that Rommel could have fought so successfully for so long by means of attrition warfare? Or that he could not have driven all the way to Suez or beyond if he had been better supported with fuel, air support and materiel replacements during his pursuit of the British toward Alexandria in June-July 1942?

Correct me if I need it here, but it is my impression that the German solution to the trench deadlock in 1918 (infiltration or "storm-trooper" tactics, an expression of maneuver warfare principles) was quite effective at the tactical level, and only failed to gain a significant victory for reasons unrelated to its tactical virtues: the lack of mechanization prevented deep exploitation of the breakthroughs they achieved; and the infusion of American manpower and materiel on the Western front decisively altered the correlation of forces.

It is only true, as LTC Eden says, that "maneuver warfare doesn't work against competent foes," if you say that every foe defeated by it was, evidently, incompetent. What shall we say of attrition warfare against competent foes, particularly if the practitioner lacks overwhelming numerical superiority and the willingness to accept massive casualties? Americans should think hard about that last condition particularly. Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Gallipoli, the Somme, and Goodwood all come to mind. That several of these combatants eventually won their war is irrelevant to the argument that their methods, in these and other examples, were often stupid, wasteful, and doomed to failure.

The initial battles of encirclement in the Soviet Union in 1941 are excellent examples of maneuver warfare in practice, and these

operations were hardly the result of desperation. Had their leader appreciated the concept more fully, and Moscow been maintained as the center of gravity for that campaign, the outcome might have been very different.

LTC Eden is wary of future Alamos, but it is difficult to imagine that our forces will not, someday, fight outnumbered and outclassed. When that time comes, they should know how to fight like Rommel in 1942, Manstein in 1943, or Napoleon in 1814. Had the Gulf War really started when our troops on the ground consisted of one brigade from the 82d Airborne, LTC Eden's definition of asymmetric warfare ("I have tanks and you don't") would have been proven out in American blood. If we can imagine such a circumstance arising again, we better have other forms of asymmetry to apply.

I agree that we need to keep enough tanks, attack helicopters, mechanized infantry, artillery, and the heavy lift to move them, to fight a stand up fight and win — and as an extension of LTC Eden's own argument, as long as we do so, our fights will mostly be of a different nature. We had better prepare for these as well, unless we want to wait for the fight to reach the Rio Grande.

Hyperbole is somewhat forgivable in the context of the current debates, but if we see the sense of Bellamy's quote, "How can we say that maneuver and attrition are anything other than indistinguishable?" Can't we avoid exaggeration and straw-man arguments, and learn to get along?

BILL TALLEN
U.S. Department of Energy
Fort Chaffee, Ark.

Eden's Article Hits the Mark

Dear Sir:

I read LTC Eden's article and thought it was right on the mark. In my current job, I deal a lot with computers and administer a wide area network. I know pretty well what computers can and cannot do, and being an AH-64A Gunpilot, I know what is needed to fight the enemy. I am always reading editorials or articles and end up thinking just the same as he does. I think that many people regard computers as the magical box and think that it will do anything. This probably happens because technology is a mystery and leaders get away with relying on the experts to sort through it. My experience has been that the experts are computer geeks who have never ridden in a tank or flown in a combat aircraft, hence they do not know anything about what is really needed in combat. Computers are useful and have a place, but we will get rid of the bayonet and tank at our own expense.

I do wish that he would have mentioned how everyone was talking about the tank being obsolete after Just Cause. With Vietnam, Grenada, and Panama, everyone was talking about what a waste of money it was

and how all the future wars were going to be light intensity conflicts. Same thing with the A-10. Desert Storm showed otherwise. When I look at the Axis of Evil, I see large mechanized forces that will need to be destroyed. That does not even include China!

LTC Eden deserves praise for his article and it should be taken to heart by those at the Pentagon who are planning and shaping the Army of the future.

CW3 WILLIAM R. CLEMONS
6th US Cavalry Brigade
Tactical Operations Officer

Eden's "Three Cheers..." Is Flawed; Renders Itself Unnecessary

Dear Sir:

It was saddening to read LTC Eden's explicit defense of attrition warfare in the March-April issue of *ARMOR*. Not only does attrition warfare usually leave a substantial butcher's bill on both sides (remember Verdun), but it negates what armor is all about. What tanks brought to warfare was not big guns or invulnerability (fortresses can have both), but operational mobility. In attrition warfare, operational art does not exist, so operational mobility becomes meaningless. We might as well replace our tanks with super-heavy *Sturmgeschuetze* (perhaps with the Abrams we have).

Space permits me just to touch on some of LTC Eden's errors:

- Many winners with force superiority have also used maneuver warfare. The Red Army at the operational level in 1944-45 and Mao in main force operations after 1945 are two examples.
- If maneuver warfare against an equal opponent has its risks, attrition warfare against an equal opponent means you must be able to accept attrition better than he can. The United States might have a small problem with that.
- The quote from Rommel — "The day goes to the side that is first able to plaster its opponents with fire" — refers to the use of fire for suppression, not mere attrition. Suppression with fire is often necessary to permit maneuver.

The most important error in LTC Eden's article occurs at the outset, when he equates maneuver warfare with the so-called "revolution in military affairs" and suggests that SAMS is teaching maneuver warfare. In fact, the RMA is pure attrition warfare, the ultimate dream of the French army of the 1930s: war reduced to nothing but acquiring and bringing fire on targets. Its spectacular failure in Kosovo was recently repeated in Afghanistan during Operation Anaconda. The last time I visited SAMS (more than ten years ago), it was a virtual recreation of the *Ecole Supérieur de Guerre*: war had been reduced to nothing more than rote processes. As the students put it to me when I

tried to talk about war, "This is very interesting, but we have paperwork to process."

In the end, LTC Eden's article is superfluous: the U.S. Army's practice, if not always its formal doctrine, is attrition warfare. And no one teaches it better than SAMS.

WILLIAM S. LIND
Author, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*

"We Must Fight to Win, Not to Not Lose"

Dear Sir:

I hope the comments made by LTC Eden in the March-April *ARMOR* were simply to stir up debate. I think it is clear to any who study warfare that maneuver-style warfare is not simply the tool of an underdog. Germany used high tempo maneuver warfare-type tactics when the *Wehrmacht* was at its height of strength, 1940 to 1942. In fact, Germany began losing the war when they went away from that philosophy, Stalingrad and Kursk being the most notable examples.

High tempo, exploitation-type tactics, and when possible going where the enemy is not, have been used in many instances besides Germany. The Pacific war against Japan, the 1973 war between Israel and Egypt, and the Persian Gulf War are again notable examples. Maneuver warfare is anything but the desperate gamble of a dying army. These battles all lasted between three days and two weeks. This is not the exception, but the norm in today's world of fully mechanized and motorized armies. These rapid, short-duration conflicts will continue to be the norm in the foreseeable future. Do the risks increase against a more capable foe? Of course, but do they not with any tactic? Indeed, using an outdated, slow style of warfare against a competent foe only increases the risk of defeat against a thoughtful, well-prepared enemy. We must fight to win, not to not lose.

The U.S. military today has taken great strides in developing and disseminating maneuver warfare doctrine. The importance placed on tempo, commander's intent, and operating in a chaotic environment are discussed regularly. Despite this, we still see reliance on the linear battlefield in the preponderance of wargames, studies, and exercises. If we truly want to shape the battlefield and thrive in a chaotic environment, why not create the fluid battlefield ourselves? Why not eliminate thinking and acting along the lines of the FEBA, FLOT, and always having an adjacent unit? LTC Eden reinforces this outdated concept when he describes the need for secure land routes to handle logistics. Only heavy forces need that type of large logistics train. Particularly in the Marines where maneuver from the sea, and the logistic capability that goes with it, is becoming more and more a reality, the U.S. military should be working to create a totally fluid environment where interdiction of enemy supply and communications, operations at

night, and rapid, mobile resupply is the norm. Rather than spend time and energy thinking of ways to supply high-demand units, we need to think of ways to reduce that demand.

The equipment and doctrine needed for this leap are in place. The LAV is particularly suited for this role. The combination of strategic transportability, long tactical range, and ease of resupply (low fuel consumption and relatively light ammunition, making helicopter resupply simple, effective, and feasible) enable it to bridge the gaps between strategic, operational, and tactical mobility. The Army is pursuing this same concept with the LAV, and soon the pieces will be in place for both ground services to pursue this type of rapid, exploitative warfare. Only one major obstacle remains: the lack of an equally mobile and sustainable fire support asset. Towed artillery is no longer the answer, however light it may be. The Paladin is a superb weapon, but clearly too heavy for this type of operation. The answer is ready for production; the LAV-120 turreted mortar. Imagine the possible tempo increases with a heavy fire support asset equally as mobile as your fastest platform, in fact on the same platform, with common fuel consumption, parts, and mobility.

The role of aircraft may slightly change. Reliance on airpower as the main supporting arm is not new to units such as LAR. The deep mission still exists, but the vast majority of sorties should be directed to ground-controlled CAS to reduce friendly fire in this environment.

Attrition warfare is not the key to the future; in fact, it has been obsolete for at least 100 years. The key now is to take warfare to the next step. The equipment and training is mostly there, all we need now is a slight shift in thinking away from established battle lines into the creation of a fluid, chaotic battle area that transcends the division between forward and rear areas. Are we up to the task?

CAPT. CHRIS SHIMP
School of Infantry
Camp Pendleton, Calif.

The Author Replies

My first editor warned me never to respond to letters. Thus, without directly replying to the many, pro and con, who took the time to read my article, I will take this opportunity to clarify my thoughts in light of their comments.

I got my history wrong. Several avid readers wrote in to point out that Grant beat Pemberton at Vicksburg, not Price. My only defense for this is that, in the white heat of creation, I neglected to check my facts. However, I'll stand behind my other historical illustrations — obviously oversimplified due to the constraints of space — and would be happy to debate our differences of opinion over a beer anytime. Parenthetically, the officer corps as a whole is sadly ignorant of military history in general. Many are buffs, with

a wealth of trivial knowledge about things like the differences between the Panzer IIlg and the Panzer IIIh, but few can carry on an intelligent conversation about military history or historiography. Frankly, I've had more serious talks on the military art with NCOs than I have had with officers, my fellow history instructors at West Point excepted.

I clearly don't understand maneuver warfare, or I have deviously created a maneuverist strawman. True, on both counts. To cut to the chase, I wrote my article because I was tired of waiting for someone else to pick up the gauntlet. I felt that some superannuated tanker with no particular skills needed to state the obvious to all the purveyors of maneuverism: we don't know what the hell you are talking about. We grew up preparing to fight an enemy who was superior to us in many ways and practicing against an OPFOR that regularly slobberknocked us. We didn't know there was a difference between maneuver and fire; you used one to employ the other, and vice-versa. Now that enemy has disappeared, and we are being told that the battlefield has moved on. No need to prepare for a mirror-image enemy. Hell, soon they'll be building refugee camps at the NTC.

The problem is twofold. First, those who believe that a revolution in military affairs has arrived have failed to convince those of us who don't that the paradigm of modern warfare is indeed broken. In fact, they rarely try — their arguments proceed from the assumption that mechanized warfare between rough equals is a thing of the past, or strictly for third worlders. Thus, the two camps have no common ground to argue from. Secondly, the vocabulary we all use is so imprecise, transitory, and vague as to be useless for intelligent discussion. This is not because our manuals are failing us — they seem more concerned with taxonomy than with tactics nowadays — but because the discipline imposed by having a 'contrarian' viewpoint in opposition just does not exist. Hence, I hope to spark a little healthy debate, one that will show that the dichotomy between maneuver and attrition warfare is a false one.

The armor community is the fulcrum on which we will raise tomorrow's army. Why? Because, alone of all the branches, we possess the bridge between maneuver and attrition. Only the tank, whatever it may look like in the coming century, is capable of both. And, in my opinion, only armies that can employ both, at need, can win wars.

LTC STEVE EDEN

ACCC Transformation Requires Modifications

Dear Sir:

Let me first say that I wholeheartedly agree with much of what MG Whitcomb expressed in his "Commander's Hatch" column in the March-April 2002 issue of *ARMOR*. In particular, his emphasis on "intent-based training" and extending institutional training be-

yond the walls of the school house to allow for life-long learning and professional development were, in my opinion, right on target.

That being said, however, I find it odd and somewhat antithetical to advocate experienced-based training where resident schools such as the Armor Captains Career Course become more "leadership- and battle-command centric" (a good thing), and yet simultaneously support the transformation of this important course into a mere four-week resident course supplemented by two weeks as an observer at a training center (read: excessive and unavoidable 'downtime' between activity 'spikes' in observed rotations), all prefaced by home station distance learning (DL) where the future student will be forced to juggle the daily rigors of his line unit (which will NOT go away) and this new, pre-AC3 DL requirement. MG Whitcomb wrote that, "We must develop leaders in a battle school and allow them to gain experience in the execution of battle command." I unequivocally agree. However, I am at an honest loss to see how much experience, much less *mastery*, of battle command a student can expect to achieve in less than a month in a new course where SGI mentorship has been ruthlessly pruned to the trunk of the educational tree.

In my opinion, this appears to be yet another paradox where a couple of very sound educational ideas (experience-based training and extended/career martial study) are espoused and yet the requisite research and analysis have not been invested to preclude a hastily-contrived, even damaging product from resulting. While I do not know if this proposal to change ACCC is official, I *do* know that the collective body of SGIs at Fort Knox has been briefed that "this is going to happen," and that a pilot-course of this model will be executed in November of this year. The idea of its immanency is so widespread that Colonel (Retired) Hackworth has published his views about it in the media (they are not favorable). I'm not sure how much more official it needs to be before we go so far down this road we can't turn back.

MG Whitcomb's aviation school analogy was appropriate — they do not send aviators out into the force prior to one proving himself as a flyer because they invest nearly two years in initial military instruction and flight school training. I would submit that sending armor captains out into the force to command companies after four weeks of "battle school," fighting computer TACOPS battles with only a very select few students commanding in CCTT, or a live tank gauntlet sounds ludicrous (once again respectfully using the terminology in his analogy).

I'm not sure what is the preeminent force driving this change — money, personnel shortfalls in the force, senior leader memories of a totally different course they attended long ago, or some other impetus. But while I know that the technology exists to train much of the knowledge-based portion of the program of instruction through distance learning, my own opinion is that it equates to

training a football team by having the players watch ESPN (to borrow another analogy). Further, anyone who has ever participated in DL courses can attest to the generally accepted fact that the quality of mentorship in such cases hovers close to zero. Perhaps I am not seeing the big picture, but I strongly feel this proposed educational design would be an egregious disservice to the officers we are duty bound to train at this institution.

As the Armor Captains Career Course currently stands, I believe we are within MG Whitcomb's intent of training leaders by "teaching the playbook" through classroom instruction and student dialogue while executing this knowledge in experience-based training. From day one, our captains are required to make rapid decisions and communicate their intent with tactical decision games and company- and task force-level operations in constructive, virtual, and live battle scenarios. There is still work to be done in achieving more resources, greater predictability, and standardized opportunities for every student in the course, but we are making experiential-based training work, and we are doing it in combination with the all-important aspect of SGI-student mentorship. The most vital resource we need to maintain is time.

We already lose the students for three entire weeks of the course by sending them over to be "mentors" for the officer basic course. While this briefs well, personal experience and prolific student feedback forces me to question the benefit of this lost time and its impact on the captains that are here for *their* training. Additionally, much valuable time is also lost in practicing the visualize and describe aspects of battle command because we are now prohibited from taking the students on tactical exercises without troops (TEWTs) to reinforce the missions we plan, prepare, and execute in the classroom, SIMNET, or CCTT. Current organization and resource limitations allow only a small percentage of students to command a company (a two-platoon, seven-tank company at that) during a live tank gauntlet, so these TEWTs are often the *only* opportunity to get captains out of the classroom or virtual environment and into the mud.

The ACCC small group instructors are committed to graduating self-confident, adaptive leaders into the force armed with the tools they need to be successful as company commanders and staff officers in today's unpredictable operational environment. That is our mission and our duty, and that is why I am submitting this letter in response to MG Whitcomb's editorial. I truly cherish the unique American freedom to air my deeply-held views concerning our honorable profession in such a forum of open and free debate without fear of censure or retribution. In most armies of the world, this is not the case. Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the education of our officer corps.

CPT JIM (JD) DUNIVAN
Small Group Instructor
N/3-16 Cav, Fort Knox

The Commanding General Responds

I want to thank CPT Dunivan for his comments on OES Transformation. *ARMOR* is an excellent forum for discussion and thought about all aspects of our profession.

You raise some important points that should be considered as we move forward with OES Transformation. Some of his issues are addressed in "Refocusing the Leader Development Lens," on page 15 in this magazine. In particular, transforming institutional learning must include more hands-on, experientially-based instruction than classroom instruction.

I am very pleased with the work that our small group instructors do to prepare captains for command. Regardless of how the final course is structured, we need prior commanders — preferably with CTC experience — as instructors to coach, teach, and mentor the future leaders of the mounted force. What we have now is not broken — it is successful. One of the important reasons we are looking at ways to improve OES is that our education system must advance at the pace of the U.S. Army's transformation in doctrine, materiel and equipment, and organization. It must also transform with society and technology to some degree, and the capabilities that the computer age brings are enormous. Successful OES Transformation is critical to the Army. We welcome everyone to the fight and discussion.

MG R. STEVEN WHITCOMB

Force-on-Force Training Provides Excellent Opportunity for New LTs

Dear Sir:

LTC Mark Pires' article, "Training Lethal Tank Crews and Sections" (March-April), offers many useful insights and techniques to increase the effectiveness of our tank platoons. As a tank platoon leader, I fully understand the challenges he describes. A new lieutenant arrives at the platoon with an understanding of the doctrine and tactics used in small units armor maneuver, but he possesses very few of the techniques and procedures necessary to command a tank. Specifically, he lacks the experience and "tricks-of-the-trade" possessed by his NCO tank commanders.

The force-on-force training described by LTC Pires would provide an outstanding opportunity for the new lieutenant to learn how to maneuver and survive. An essential element of the force-on-force training event is the purity of the exercise; the tank commanders could focus on tank maneuver without the added complications of the command net, calling for fire support, logistics, and casualty evacuation. These tasks enter the training at the platoon level, after completing individual tank skills. This process is similar to the tank gunnery crew completing

Tank Table VIII before adding the additional tasks for Tank Table XII.

As tank platoon leaders, it falls on our shoulders to make such training happen if the schedule does not formally allow it. There is not an armor battalion or cavalry squadron in the U.S. Army that possesses a surplus of training time. As a lieutenant, one is not responsible for scheduling major training events, but if one carefully manages the *Troop Leading Procedures*, this type of training can be used for mission rehearsals. Rehearsals at the platoon level do not involve specific actions on specific terrain, they should focus on battle drills that will result in mission accomplishment regardless of where or when contact occurs. The force-on-force training would be an excellent rehearsal of contact with inferior, superior, or unknown forces.

As a tank platoon leader, my NCOs and I look for MILES training opportunities any time the troop is positioned in an assembly area. If the situation permits removing a platoon from the perimeter, one can use any small piece of terrain to drill one-on-one, three-on-one, and section-on-section. In addition to creating lethal tank sections, this experience was the most fun our platoon had during field training. The bragging rights for the winning tank were worth the extra three hours of training. The AARs were conducted internally, and the best lessons I learned as a tank commander were the result of being zapped by one of the other tank commanders. This type of training also prevents the boredom of the assembly area from setting in; tankers are happiest when they are tanking. In closing, the tank platoon leader cannot wait for scheduled training time to prepare a platoon. If your unit does not have the time for a formal force-on-force tank exercise, then the challenge is to incorporate it into the only time you own, the mission preparation.

1LT RYAN C. POPPLE
B Trp, 1-10 Cavalry

Current Pistol Qualification Standard Inadequate for Airport Security Duty

Dear Sir:

I want to thank MAJ Pryor for his article, "Conducting Homeland Security: Moving Swiftly into a New Era of Defense" (March-April *ARMOR*), and emphasize one point he made. He stated that during his mission analysis for National Guardsmen to serve as armed security in civilian airports, his staff determined that these soldiers would require handgun skills far beyond the Army's standard combat pistol qualification. I strongly agree and applaud his staff for recognizing this and implementing a more rigorous training standard.

The Army's standard pistol qualification is, in my opinion, inadequate for minimal combat defensive purposes. An active security guard in a crowded, busy civilian environ-

ment requires and deserves a much more intensive training and performance requirement. The civilians in these protected facilities also deserve a soldier who can perform this important duty safely and competently.

The Army pistol qualification gives a soldier 40 rounds of ammunition and only requires he hit 16 targets out of 30 presented. This means that the soldier can fire and miss with 24 rounds, over half the rounds issued, and still be "qualified" with the M9 Beretta pistol. Twenty-four missed shots on a firing range do not present a problem. One missed shot in a crowded airport, or any other civilian populated area, is a serious, deadly problem.

Military tactics are full of terms for small arms implementation such as "suppressive fire," for which again, fired rounds that don't actually hit a threat target are acceptable. These security missions among civilians require a much more precise, surgical approach to shooting. The Kentucky National Guard has recognized this and has taken steps to accomplish it. The KYNG has contracted a nationally known instructor/trainer on practical handgun shooting to train its security force on safely and effectively engaging threat targets in a civilian environment — in other words, how to quickly and safely end a gunfight in your favor without endangering bystanders.

Another lesson they have learned is that not only is the standard army pistol training not adequate for such missions, but the standard army holster is inadequate as well. The M12 holster issued to most soldiers with the M9 pistol has a flap covering the grip of the gun, which is secured with a buckle. The instructor demonstrated this problem during the initial training of the KYNG security force. He had the top-shooting soldier in the group face the target with his loaded pistol holstered. Another soldier stood next to him (unarmed), but faced the opposite direction. The instructor directed that when he blew the whistle, signifying that the threshold for deadly force had been reached, the shooter was to draw, aim, and fire, and the soldier facing rearward was to run away from the firing line and stop when he heard the first shot. The first shot was fired in over 5 seconds, at which point the "runner" had covered nearly 40 yards.

Clearly, this put the security guard at a great disadvantage. If he were engaging a deadly threat moving away from him, the threat would be out of range of his weapon before the guard could fire. If the threat were attacking the guard, the soldier would not be able to use his weapon before having the threat upon him, and possibly losing control of his weapon. After this demonstration, the security force was issued holsters that safely secured the weapon, but allowed a much easier and quicker draw of the weapon.

When we place soldiers in armed security positions among civilians, we owe it to them and the public to ensure they are properly trained and equipped. Too often, leaders and planners only see these soldiers as a deter-

rent to possible threat. The presence of a uniformed, armed soldier certainly is a deterrent to most people. But we also must not rule out the possibility that deterrence may fail, and these soldiers may face a deadly threat and need to use their weapon to protect their lives and the lives of others. We do not have to make these soldiers Olympic-caliber marksman or quick-draw gunslingers, but we must ensure that we train and equip them to the best of the Army's ability for this difficult mission.

MAJ ED MONK
Fort Knox, Ky.

Bylaws Clarify St. George Criteria

Dear Sir:

Please allow me to thank the Armor Association for the opportunity to serve on the Executive Council. Individually and collectively, we represent and serve all armor and ground cavalry soldiers with dignity and pride to preserve the integrity of our branch and our Association.

Each year the Executive Council is charged with revising and solidifying the Association's bylaws, reviewing the criteria for awarding the Order of St. George and the Noble Patron of Armor, and discussing how the Association can improve and better support our armor and ground cavalry soldiers. For 3 years, I have had the opportunity to hear astute guidance from some of the most revered graybeards — men who have much experience and are a wealth of knowledge.

I have also had opportunities to share thoughts, concerns, make recommendations, and vote on issues affecting the Association. However, it appears that there is some disagreement over award criteria. This issue is not a blatant disregard or an intentional abuse of the system, but rather a lack of understanding.

During the last Executive Council meeting, the Council addressed qualifications for various awards offered by the Association. Once again, the issue was raised that soldiers who were not of armor or ground cavalry lineage be allowed to receive the Order of St. George. The Executive Council discussed this possibility and voted against including verbiage in the bylaws to allow such submissions. Criteria for the award is available online at www.usarmor-assn.org. Please take the time to review the standards!

Armor and ground cavalry leaders can show their support for our branch and the Association. Each time a name is submitted for the St. George, ask yourself if all the members, current, past, and future of the Order of St. George would embrace this individual as a member of their honored society. We need to protect our heritage, keep it sacred, renew it to be something that young soldiers and officer's ascribe to and desire to achieve. In my opinion, we have not done a very good

job in the past of protecting our lineage or supporting the Association.

For those of you who think the requirement to send a fee is a way of supporting the Association because it creates a profit for the Association — you are wrong. The fee covers the cost of the medallion, printing the certificate, and shipping and handling. For those of you who have pushed through a St. George for an unqualified individual — shame on you. For those of you who have submitted individuals to receive the award and signed the recommendation without being a member of the Association — shame on you. More importantly, for those of you in the routing chain who approve packets that do not qualify — shame, shame on you because not only do you allow the St. George or Joan-de-Arc to be cheapened, you are failing your supervisor who may or may not be aware of the violation. Finally, and this happens more than most of us realize, the recipient should not pay for his own medallion. Whoever submitted or endorsed the packet should be responsible for the associated fee.

The new bylaws remove any gray area, clearly defining who can be honored with the St. George. I encourage each of you to adhere to the bylaws when submitting a recommendation for the award. For commanders who want to recognize individuals who have served the armor and mounted cavalry above and beyond — the Noble Patron of Armor is just as prestigious. Therefore, care and judgment must be used when submitting those nominations as well.

We are a proud branch, we have an amazing history and lineage, we are at the leading edge of all future combat developments and operations, and we are by far the most technically and tactically competent branch in the Army today. I encourage each of us to continue supporting the Armor Association, become a member, renew your memberships, and encourage soldiers and peers to do the same. We have an inherent duty as tankers and ground cavalymen to protect and perpetuate the embodiment of the St. George. I want to know that when I earn the right to wear the Order of St. George bronze medallion that I am among the finest tankers and ground cavalymen.

JON B. TIPTON
CPT, Armor
Texas Army National Guard

"Master Gunner" Responsibility Should Belong to Armor Leaders

Dear Sir:

I would like to comment on the master gunner letter by SFC McIntosh in the March-April 2002 issue. I agree with the general thrust of his proposal to change who has responsibility in this regard; however, I submit there should be a far different outcome.

When I was with troop units, there was no such thing as a master gunner. As a platoon

leader, troop commander, company commander, and squadron commander, I was the master gunner of my unit (and I have the ears to prove it).

When I was a tank gunnery instructor at the Armor School (1958-61), the master gunner program was not even a remote consideration. I was truly amazed when I learned some years later that such a position had come into existence. I considered it a misguided attempt to solve a glaring problem, such as, a general lack of gunnery experience and knowledge by the majority of armor officers (coupled with a deficit of properly trained turret mechanics).

In my dealings with artillery units, I can honestly say I never worked with any of their company-grade officers who was not a master gunner. I cannot say the same for armor officers (and, ironically, direct fire is far less involved than the artillery's indirect approach).

Because there is still such a position as master gunner, I assume the same shortcoming exists today and that is an abomination. We should emulate the artillery in this respect and make all armor leaders gunnery experts.

The way to do this is to give more than lip service to the fact a tank is a weapons system and not a vehicle. The gunnery aspect should be touted as paramount and not co-equal to automotive and communications. The only reason we move and communicate is to effectively employ our firepower.

Every armor officer should be made to understand he is expected to be masterful when it comes to the gunnery art and science (but don't get the turret mechanic's duties involved in this qualification). After all, gunnery is the *raison d'être* of a tank.

For their part, the Armor School should weight their course curriculums and priorities accordingly. It follows that there needs to be more unit firing. In these ways, there will be created a revelation and revolution in capability within the Combat Arm of Decision.

This new standard and expectation would also obviate the need for a master gunner and place the responsibility where it clearly belongs — on all armor leaders.

THOMAS G. QUINN
COL, USA, Ret.
Radcliff, Ky.

P.S. I must confess that I have long had a sneaking suspicion that artillery officers have a bit more gray matter than their armor brethren. I say this not only because of their gunnery prowess, but also for their superior powers of persuasion. As an example of the latter, they have somehow convinced the powers-that-be to give them a whopping eight men to operate and maintain a self-propelled howitzer, while the best armor can do is to try and scrape by with a four-man tank crew (which often ends up to be three or less), but that's a story for another day.